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Imagery analysis report

Hsian A Development 1970 — 1979 (TSR)

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HSIAN A DEVELOPMENT 1970 — 1979 (TSR)**INTRODUCTION**

1. (TSR) The development of the Hsian A aircraft was the result of a need by the People's Republic of China (PRC) to improve its capabilities in the area of high-altitude, high-speed interception. The first prototype of the Hsian A was observed on imagery of [REDACTED] at the flight test center at Xian (Hsian) Airframe Plant Yanliang (Yen-liang) 172 [REDACTED]. It is similar in size and appearance to the Soviet Mikoyan-designed FLIPPER and is assessed to be a single-seat, twin-jet, delta-wing, high-performance interceptor (Figure 1). There have been no apparent external changes in the design of subsequently produced Hsian A aircraft.

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CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

2. (TSR) Between June 1970, the date of the initial identification of the Hsian A, and April 1973, the aircraft was seen only at the Xian Flight Test Center. During that period, it was observed on 11 occasions, usually parked on a revetted hardstand at the flyaway airfield.

3. (TSR) On [REDACTED] a Hsian A was observed for the first time at Shenyang (Shen-yang) Airframe Plant 112 [REDACTED].

Also on this date, a fuselage, a wing section, and a horizontal stabilizer section of a Hsian A were seen adjacent to the taxiway of the flyaway airfield. Each section appeared to be on a dolly. These sections could have been parts of a mockup of a full-scale Hsian A. For several months, the sections remained in this same area, which is near the aerodynamic test facilities of the plant. The presence of a Hsian A, Hsian A components, and aerodynamic test facilities at Shenyang Airframe Plant 112 is strong evidence that the Hsian A prototype aircraft were produced at this plant.

4. (TSR) Between May 1973 and January 1976, a Hsian A was observed at the Xian Airframe Plant Flight Test Center on at least ten different occasions. During this same time-frame, a Hsian A was seen only three times at Shenyang Airframe Plant 112. The imagery of the two plants was obtained on various dates during this period; whether a second Hsian A existed could not be determined.

5. [REDACTED] In January 1976, two Hsian A were observed for the first time at Xian Flight Test Center. Another Hsian A was observed in October 1976 and a fourth in February 1977. The increase of three prototype aircraft within a 13-month period indicates that the problems encountered with the aircraft between 1970 and 1973 had probably been resolved. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] A fifth Hsian A was observed at Xian Flight Test Center in February 1978. Since that time, three to five Hsian A have usually been seen at the flight test center.

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6. (TSR) Prior to May 1979, only single appearances of Hsian A were observed at Shenyang Airframe Plant 112. A high count of three Hsian A was observed on [REDACTED]. There have been observations of two Hsian A at the Shenyang Plant on two occasions since May 1979.

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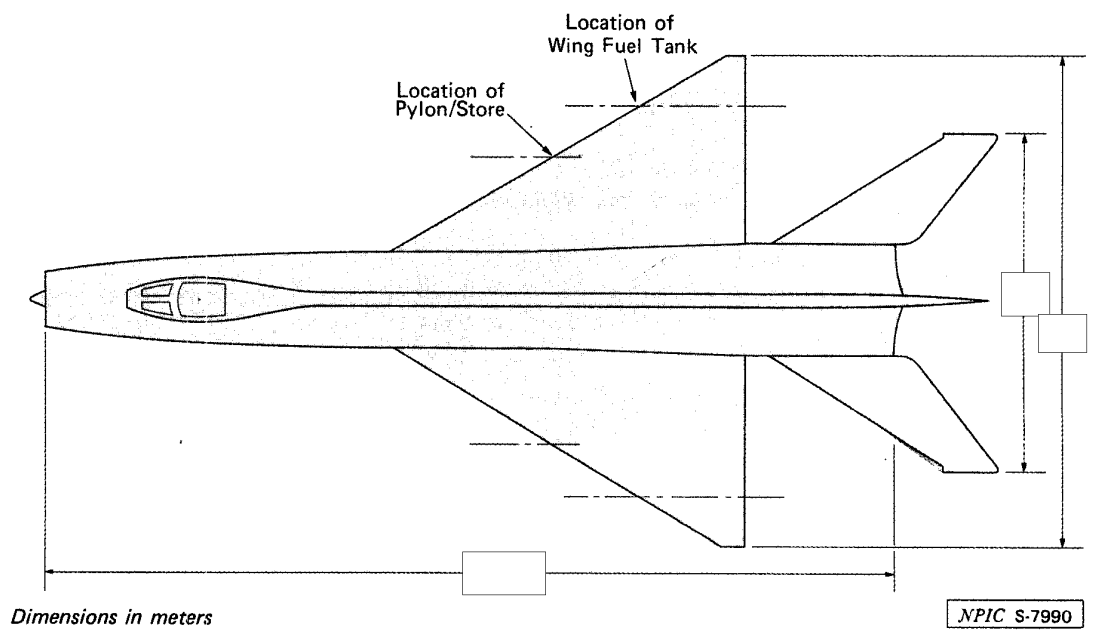
7. (TSR) On imagery of [REDACTED] six Hsian A were confirmed as being in the PRC—five at Xian Flight Test Center and one at Shenyang Airframe Plant 112. The imagery was obtained within a one-hour period with no indication of a recent Hsian A takeoff or landing at either flyaway airfield. This is the high-

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FIGURE 1. LINE DRAWING OF HSIAN A

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est Hsian A count for same-day coverage of the two plants.

8. (TSR) It is possible, however, that at least a seventh Hsian A exists. On imagery obtained within the five-day period from [] [] four Hsian A were observed at Hsian and three at Shenyang.

9. [] Except for one occasion, Hsian A aircraft have been seen only at Xian Airframe Plant's Flight Test Center and Shenyang Airframe Plant 112. On [] a Hsian A was observed at Cangxian (Tsang-hsien) Airfield [] It remained at the airfield through [] and was not present when the airfield was imaged on [] The 11th Air School, the primary Advanced Jet Fighter Training School in the PRC, is based at the Cangxian Airfield.² The airfield currently has a complement of FISHBED and FARMER aircraft and should be considered as a prime candidate for future Hsian A deployment.

External Stores

10. (TSR) Hsian A at Xian Flight Test Center have been observed with external stores. On several occasions, a Hsian A was observed with external fuel tanks mounted outboard of the wing fences. These fuel tanks appeared to be similar to the tanks used on the FISHBED (Figure 2).

11. (TSR) Since [] several Hsian A have been designed with armament positions (Figure 3). These [] pylons/stores are positioned inboard of the wing fence and extend [] forward of the leading edge of the wing. There have been no indications of air-to-air missiles on or near the Hsian A aircraft.

IMAGERY ANALYST'S COMMENTS

12. (TSR) Based on an analysis of imagery obtained between June 1970 and late 1975, it is believed that only one Hsian A prototype was probably in flight test status during that period. When the problems with the aircraft were almost solved (possibly in 1974), the decision to continue prototype testing was probably made. The delivery of three Hsian A to the Xian Flight Test Center in 1976 would indicate that the Hsian A performance met the flight requirements for high-speed, high-altitude interceptor missions.

13. (TSR) With six or possibly seven Hsian A currently in the PRC inventory, the development program of the basic aircraft should be almost complete. Possible delay of series production or operational deployment may be encountered because of the nonavailability of suitable air-to-air missile systems to support the interceptor function of this aircraft.

REFERENCES

DOCUMENTS

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2. DIA. DDI-1300-17-76-SI, *AOB Aircraft Order-of-Battle (U)* Mar 76 (TOP SECRET []) 25X1

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(S) Comments and queries regarding this report are welcome. They may be directed to [] Asian Forces Division, Imagery Exploitation Group, NPIC, [] 25X1

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